

# You Were a Blue Lake

Rob Hunter

*In Memory of David Strain*

You were a blue lake  
edged with dense green forest to the water's edge  
reflecting the seasons' sun and weather

until milfoil vines rooted deep,  
grew thick and flowered to the surface,  
invasive and insistent –

rooted deep, grew thick and blossomed  
upwards, invasive, invisible, and insistent.

In the hospital as you slept some restless  
cancer-morphine sleep  
I expected to see a vine creep  
out of your mouth, ripple your surface  
with your ragged breathing.

And while that green underwater forest  
was taking over, the nature of you was slowing,  
schools of your ideas finning in the darkness,  
running out of room, running out of oxygen.  
Occasionally your hands would take on some task  
and I imagined  
you were reading book titles  
or counting hay bales or coaching some team.

The blue heron of your consciousness waited in the shallows,  
and finally with a leap  
ascended, defying gravity, spreading enormous wings  
to go find you somewhere else.